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District of Arizona*

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NOGALES, SONORA MAN SENTENCED TO OVER 16 YEARS IN PRISON FOR IMPORTING METHAMPHETAMINE INTO THE US

TUCSON, Ariz. - Jose Cardenas-Mendoza, 41, of Mexico, was sentenced here to 200 months in federal prison by U.S. District Court Judge Cindy K. Jorgenson. Cardenas-Mendoza was found guilty by a federal jury on January 11, 2007, of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine and importation of 5.8 kilograms methamphetamine.

On September 22, 2005, Cardenas-Mendoza attempted to enter the U.S. from Mexico via the Grand Avenue Port of Entry in Nogales, Ariz. using a valid U.S. border crossing card. However, he was found with 13 packages of methamphetamine, weighing 5.8 kilograms, concealed in a hidden compartment installed in the transmission hump of his pickup truck. Laboratory tests confirmed that the substance was methamphetamine with 88% purity.

During the trial, Cardenas-Mendoza denied knowledge of the methamphetamine in his vehicle, claiming that he had loaned the vehicle to an acquaintance just prior to the offense. Evidence presented both during the investigation and at trial indicated that he was aware of the drugs and intended to bring them into the U.S.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The prosecution was handled by Bradley Giles and Angela Woolridge, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Tucson. Sentencing occurred in Tucson on November 7, 2007.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-1969-TUC-CKJ
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